It was also clarified to the prospective bidders that 'public authoirty' means entity/authority/organization/enterprise controlled by the Government, *e.g.* a public sector undertaking. Only one such entity may be permitted to operate the service in a given service area.

Since, either Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited or Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, which are public sector undertakings, have already got licences for CMTS to cover whole of the country, VSNL was not eligible for grant of the licence.

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana Kendras in Gujarat

2471. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Gram Panchayats willing to introduce Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana Kendras (PSSYKs) in Gujarat;

(b) the number of PSSYKs proposed to be set up in the State; and

(c) the number of PSSYKs yet to be set up and by when the work will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) 133 Gram Panchayats expressed willingness to avail facility of Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) and accordingly 133 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) were set up upto 31-03-2001.

(b) and (c) A target of setting up 90 new Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras has been fixed for Gujarat Circle for the year 2001-2002.

Out of order telephones due to rain

2472. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to heavy rain, thousands of telephones become out of order every year;

(b) the steps Government are taken to avoid such recurrence every monsoon; and

(c) the reasons for such things happening every year and the persons responsible for this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) Proper coordination with the Civic agencies like water works, electricity department etc.;

(ii) Patrolling of the various cable routes intensified;

(iii) All paper core cables are being replaced by PIJF or optical fibre cables in a phased manner;

(iv) Induction of WLL in the network.

(c) Underground telephone cables are damaged mainly due to road digging by civic agencies for laying of sewer lines, water pipes, Electric cables etc. Recently, there has been a spurt in these digging activities as many other agencies were also engaged in road digging namely Private Telecom Operators, Metro Rail Transport System, PWD for construction of over bridges etc. Unexpected natural calamities like landslides, floods etc., during the rainy season also result into cable damage.

Introduction of Automatic Refund System in MTNL

2473. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of recently introduced MTNL scheme of Automatic Refund System for subscribers where telephones remain out of order and non-functional for more than 7 days due to unrepaired faults etc.;

(b) whether there is any foolproof mechanism and system in MTNL to check and monitor that aforesaid scheme is implemented properly and regularly;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether in most of West Delhi Telephone Exchanges (particularly in Rajouri Garden-II) this scheme is not implemented automatically; and

(e) if so, the measures taken to ensure that scheme is implemented in letter and spirit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Under the Automatic Refund System, information of telephone numbers faulty for 7 days and more is automatically transferred from computerised Fault Repair System (FRS) for granting rebates in rental.

(b) The system is based on on-line computer functioning and it is expected that this shall be foolproof.

(c) Proper checks are built in the system to ensure automatic transmission and the accuracy of the information from Fault Repair System (FRS) to Billing system. There is also a provision to imcorporate the rent rebate details through a menu.

(d) The system has been tested and provided in all the Areas/ Exchanges of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) as on date including those of West Delhi.

(e) Does not arise.